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1 John 2:7-11 – A Righteousness Shining Within

1 John 2:7-11. “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Man, I love the Epistle of John, don't you? It goes way beyond pragmatism into reality, and that's where he's wanting us to come to terms with the reality of our faith. He's made me think about it a lot. I was talking to my wife; we do a lot of talking. I talked to my wife in the car the other day, actually that's probably where we do a lot of our talking. I said, “You know, we read a passage like ‘walk by faith,’” Of course, we're to walk in the Spirit, Romans 8, just to give you reference. To walk according to the Spirit is a pretty interesting thing. I said, “I think we take credit for the fact that we're walking in the Spirit, when we're really not.” I think we perceived that because we did something maybe nice, magnanimous or altruistic towards others, that our thought might be that, “Hey, I think I was walking in spirit.” But in order to walk in the Spirit, you actually have to love the person that you're serving, you have to actually love, in your heart, that ministry. I'm not sure how we do that. I know that a lot of times I'll do the right thing. I'm not really sure my heart is in it.

So, as we talk about 1 John, what we're talking about is the reality of our faith. He's wanting us to get real. He puts it in terms of physical because, like James would say, “faith without works is dead.” So, if you say something, let's see the tangibility of it. So, he starts off with “flesh,” and he talks about the fact that “I saw what real looked like.” You go, “What do you mean you saw what real looked like?” “No, I really touched Him. I walked with Jesus. I touched Him. He healed me. He washed my feet. I felt the nail prints of His hands. He didn't just tell me that He loved me, He loved me. I could see it, everything that He did for me was visible.” So, he starts off the book that way; what we have seen, what we have beheld with our hands concerning the word of God, the reality of the word of God. It's more than just rhetoric, it's something that is lived out and so, he begins that way. His point is if you're going to have real fellowship, and if you're going to have real confidence, then you have to get real in your life about the things that you say; because we want to have real confidence that we are God's children. I want to have real confidence that I really am His. So, 1 John really is about getting real, and he'll repeat words like

“truth.” In fact, if you're not thinking true, then John will say to you, you're a liar. Let me just give you some examples.

1 John 1:6. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;”

A very simple phrase isn't.

1 John 2:3. “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

1 John 2:4. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;”

There's your rhetoric, the words, “the one who says, I have come to know Him.”

Black and white, right?

If you go a little bit further. It says in 1 John 4:20,

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

That's really what he's going to be talking about in the passage we're going to be looking at today, is that whole sense of, “I love God, but I just can't stand that other person next to me.” John says you're lying, because it's a lot easier to love somebody that you don't see. Read what it says there in 1 John 4:20. It's really easy to love somebody you don't see. It's the person that you can see that you have a trouble loving, right? The neighbor, more specifically, the brother. The thing that draws us together as a body of Christ is the fact that we are children of God. In fact, one of the great statements that is made in the Epistle of John is behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God. (1 John 3:1) We're children of God. The thing that unites us is that we love Christ. We don't love one another because of what somebody else does for us or because they necessarily make us feel good. We don't love one another necessarily because we have the same personalities. We love one another because that's a child of God, and I'm going to love them because they love God. That's why we love one another. I didn't know if you knew that or not. So, we fundamentally don't have an option whether or not we love one another. We love one another because that's a kid of God, and why would I not love somebody that loves God? Why would I not do that?

So, he begins to talk about the reality of this whole thing of fellowship and the great commandments that God gives us. If you say you love God and He says, “Well, would you do this for Me?” then we go, “No.” Then where's the love in that? So, the point of the matter is if you say you love God, you'll do what He says. That makes sense, doesn't it? Because doing what He says really is you trusting in Him and believing that whatever He says is the right thing is the best thing, it's the loving thing. So, you're going to do what He says. Sure, that's just the reality.

Now He's going to turn to you, and He's going to say things like, "You need to forgive." We're going to go, "It's hard." He goes, "I didn't ask you whether it was hard or not. You're going to forgive." See, I mean you go to the Lord's prayer, and He goes, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who trespassed against us." Then He goes on and explains it in Matthew 6, and if you don't forgive, then He doesn't forgive you of your sins. That's pretty interesting. Matthew 18, Peter will go, "How many times do I have to do this thing?" The answer becomes very clear within the passage because the realization is of the magnitude of God's salvation upon us and how He has forgiven us of all of our sins. Why would we not forgive a brother? You don't forgive somebody because they're deserving of it. You forgive somebody because Christ forgave you. Period. You don't sit and think, "Well, should I?" or "Shouldn't I?" There is no "Should I?" or "Shouldn't I?" You just do it; but all of this is that which displays the character of our faith. Do we really believe it? Do we really believe what we say? John will say, let's be truthful about it because, we go back, how could you have a relationship with God if you're not truthful? So, if you say you have no sin, you're lying. You can't have a relationship that way. So, everything about this book is about you just having to come clean. Now, you say you love God, do what He says.

Now, as he goes on in 1 John 2, he begins talking about relationships, in specific, he's dealing with the fellowship, the body of Christ that comes together. He begins to talk about this thing called love and forgiveness and your sense of compassion towards the brother. In fact, one of the statements that he makes in first John 3, and we've quoted it before, but verse 17,

"But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

We quoted that wonderful passage in James, somebody has a need, and you walk up and say, be warm, be filled, be clothed. What are you talking about? Go help him. Go do something that demonstrates the reality of this. We do a lot of talking about stuff, but we do very little action. So, he's talking about the reality in your life. Are you displaying the character and nature of Christ?

So, we pick up in first John 2 and once again, he deals with doing what God says, the commandments of God. He says, I'm writing to you a command, but it's not anything new. The word that he basically uses is, it's something that you've known all along. So, he's not giving you any new information within the passage.

1 John 2:7. "Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard."

Now, as it goes on within the passage, he begins to tell us what this commandment is, it's love your brother. I'm kind of giving you what he's going to say, love your brother. It's an old commandment. He's been telling you that all along, right? He'll go on and say in 1 John 3, "not as Cain loved Abel." Obviously, it wasn't love, but actually love one another.

1 John 3:11. "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;"

Ok, so this is not a new message.

He starts that way in 1 John 2:7,

"Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard."

This is a very interesting point, and you might want to underline this phrase because it's the key to understanding what he's saying within the text. What he's stating is that there's an old commandment that is a commandment, it's the Word, and it convicts your heart. I mean, you begin to hear the truth and light begins to shine. You begin to hear the truth and hope begins to stir within yourself, and righteousness, even in your soul, begins to call. You hear the truth, and you know it's the truth and you know it's something that you need to do, and you know it's something that needs to be a part of your life. You hear the truth and love begins to be possible because you know that there's a reality to these things. So, the word of God begins to call. The way that James puts it, and if you turn to James 1 you begin to realize that hearing the words isn't enough. So, James will say this,

James 1:21. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

Now, in this particular text, he's making reference more to our psyche and the fact that it's literally going to save who we are, it's going to help keep you sane; besides, to forgive you of your sins.

James 1:22. "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

James 1:23. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

James 1:24. for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

James 1:25. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

"The law of liberty" means that there has to be something else besides just somebody telling you to do something. That means there has to be a law in your heart that says, "I want to do it." That would be the law of liberty.

“Not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer,” in other words, there is a word that you hear, and you go, “That's really interesting, I need to work on that.” Then you walk away, and you just do the same thing that you've always done.

So, if you look back in 1 John 2:1, he says, the old commandment is you hear the word, and the law is given. And you go, “Yeah, I've read that.” It says at the end of the verse “the old commandment is the word which you have heard.” That's what makes it old. It is interesting that the Greek word referring to “old” that he uses within the passage is making reference to *something that wears out*. Paul will make mention of this in 1 Corinthians 3, when he talks about Moses going up into the mountain, he begins to glow; but then the glory begins to fade. What he's talking about is, of course, is the interesting picture of the law. I mean, there's something about the law that says, you know, I need to do the right thing. We talked about New Year's resolutions. There's something about New Year's resolutions, “I need to do the right thing.” And it works for a while, but it fades because it's not something that's a part of who we are. It's something that we feel like we have to do, but we didn't necessarily own it, and that's the reason why it fades. That's the reason why it becomes old. So, the passage says that the old commandment, what it does, is it fades. Why? Because you just heard it, or, as James would say, you were a hearer, but not an effectual doer. It didn't become a part of your life.

1 John 2:8. “On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.”

You know, you hear this stuff out there, but then there's some things that are in here. That's the true. He's making an interesting differentiation. That just because somebody tells you have to do something doesn't mean you'll do it. It's that old law that never could really energize me to do the right thing, but there is a new law that says, “I want to do it.”

1 John 5:3. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.”

Why? Because I want to do them. Where did that come from? That came from the new commandment. The old commandment told me I need to love my brother. You go, “Where is that?” I'm glad you asked. That's in Leviticus 19. I like the way that it's put in Leviticus 19. It's actually God saying, “You need to get along with one another.” I can almost see a parent talking to the kids in the back seat, “Get along with one another, will ya?”

Leviticus 19:11. “You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.”

Don't lie to one another. Remember going to school? I remember, I think kindergarten was pretty good. I think it started getting bad around fourth grade, but I think that's where kids start getting emboldened. I don't know, maybe for you it was earlier; but somewhere along the line kids get really smart and they get sassy, and they get critical. Man, they just get mean, no other way to explain it. They just get mean. They'll say things to you, and you know they're lying but

you can't put your finger on it; but they're purposely being deceptive so they can just belittle you in some way. In many respects, you know, this is why Christ was so angry at the religious leaders. I've often thought what an interesting thing, when you go through the Gospels, you rarely have ever see Christ angry at, we would call them a sinner. What we see is Christ angry about are those that declare that they're not sinners and walk in this righteous plane. It's no wonder why people hate church so much. They oftentimes go into these places and they're very condemning and critical and hostile places in which people feel like they're so much better. The reality is, they're no different than you and me; but Christ would talk to them, and He says, you're just hypocrites. You're just putting on masks. You're lying. Hypocrites is another way of saying "you're lying," because the hypocrite is somebody who says, "I love God," and they're lying. Everything is duplicitous and everything that they do and everything that they say, you know, say one thing to your face and do something else behind your back, and Christ says, "You're just a bunch of liars, is what you are."

Matthew 23 is one of the great passages which He repeats over and over again, "You're just hypocrites." John is saying we can't live this way. There's no confidence in this way. There's no fellowship in this way. There's no reality in this way. You've got to be real. So, when you say that you love your brother, it has to be real. It's interesting that it is in the law, and the way that it's put is you can't deal falsely, you can't lie to one another.

Leviticus 19:12. "You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD."

I like the great Psalm where it says a righteous man "swears to his own hurt it does not change." (Psalm 15:4) Don't you love that phrase?

Leviticus 19:13. "You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning."

That is to say that if you're the person hiring somebody, and you know that person needs the money tomorrow, you cannot sit on the money. You need to give it to them today. Just consider it, it's just thoughtful, and it should be to your own hurt. I mean, even if you have to scrape, you can't let this man go without. You need to make sure.

Leviticus 19:14. "You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."

"Well, he didn't hear me."

"Who would know?" God knows, and that's reality. See, we don't do what we do because it's seen or because it's heard. We do what we do because I want to please God. Ephesians 5, trying to learn what is pleasing to God, that's the reality of my faith. I actually believe there is a God and I actually believe that He is somebody I want to please; and quite frankly, I want to be like Him.

Leviticus 19:15. "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

Leviticus 19:16. "You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD."

Talking against somebody else, you can't do that. You know, a lot of these things we think, "Well, that's not that bad, just because I'm doing a little gossiping." Yeah, until you become the one that people are gossiping about.

Leviticus 19:17. "You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him."

Did you read the passage, verse 17? You can reprove him, but you can't hate him. It's an old commandment. The passage tells us it's an old commandment that I give you, but it's the word that's heard; but there is a new commandment.

1 John 2:8. "On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true..."

Now, once again, what we're dealing with is that which is reality in Him. *Alēthēs* is the Greek word that is used for truth, but it carries with it the gamut of not only that which you speak is true, but that which you speak is sincere. It's genuine, it's real, it's transparent and it's one of the reasons why truth in Scripture is almost always parallel with light; because darkness is that obscurity that likes to hide things and cover things. So, you put on masks and all these kind of things, but light is very transparent and open of other things. So, you come to the church, and we say that we love you. We actually do love you, and if you're thinking, "Well, I don't know why they love me." I'm going to tell you, if you love God, we really love you. You're a child of God. How valuable is that? That's a wonderful thing.

"On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him..."

Watch the next phrase:

"...and in you."

I like the way that Peter puts it in 2 Peter 1:19,

"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts."

His point is that we have a lamp in the word of God, and the lamp is pointing us in the right direction, but it's still dark and everything is obscure. But the day is coming when light comes within our hearts, and everything becomes clear, and darkness doesn't cover anymore. The day star rises in your hearts.

Ephesians 5:8-10 puts it this way:

Ephesians 5:8. "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

Ephesians 5:9. (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

Ephesians 5:10. trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."

It is "trying to learn" which is an interesting word. That word that is used within the passage is making reference to the fact that it's kind of like testing gold to see if it's real gold. It's like testing metals to see if they're real metal. What we're trying to find out is what we have real in our lives. This is pleasing to the Lord. So, when it says, "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord;" what we're doing is we're testing to see if what we have is real. That's what brought up the conversation between me and my wife because I said, "If I were honest with myself, maybe 10% of the day I walk in the spirit." I don't know. Maybe I'm giving myself too much credit. Because to walk in the spirit, I'm doing what I'm doing out of love. I actually have joy. (Galatians 5) I have peace. Kindness is coming in. There's self-discipline in my life, but the whole perspective of why I'm doing something is coming out of an abundance of the heart. As we're reading there in 2 Corinthians, that God loves a cheerful giver and this is out of the abundance of the heart that I begin to do things rather than out of obligation, duty and that's not a bad thing; but at the end of the day, Galatians will tell me if you're doing what you're doing because of great resolve of the flesh, you have no reward in heaven. None. Think about that. That which is of the flesh is of the flesh, that which is of the Spirit is Spirit, and the spirit is the only thing that brings about those eternal rewards. Don't be deceived, God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap if he sows according to the flesh, of the flesh he reaps corruption. I don't care how nice the thing was that you did, if it wasn't of the Spirit, it has no life to it. When he begins to talk about this whole thing of the reality of this new commandment, the great thing is that it's just coming out of the heart. Look, who wants to be in any kind of relationship where everybody's faking it? That's Hollywood. So, you might as well just go out and get in your car and go there. Who wants to live in that kind of surrounding? The church should be something far different from that.

So, he writes:

1 John 2:8. "On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining."

The transparency. Obscurity no longer exists. Everything is just what they say.

1 John 2:9. "The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now."

"I'm being transparent with you, right?" That's what he's saying.

You're not telling the truth. "Oh, I love God. I love God." I've seen people pontificate. I was apologizing the other day because I'm against public prayers, because I've seen it so misused.

People get on their soap box they want to pontificate and display just how wonderful, righteous they are and I'm going, please, go in your closet. Shut the door. Matthew 6, talk to God. He hears you. A lot of our prayers are that we're giving a message to everybody around us. Did you forget who you're supposed to be talking to? It says, "Our father, which art in heaven." So, you're actually talking to Him and it's that reality that John is wanting us to get into. He begins to say, look, it's impossible for you to actually love God and not love His kids. Now, once again, the kids are here and they're real. God, ok, I can't see Him. So, goes back to 1 John 4:20, right? If you can't love the one you can see, how can you say that you love the one you can't? John is trying to help us get real about our faith. The clarity of this is:

1 John 2:9. "The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now."

1 John 2:10. "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him."

The reason why we find ourselves in sin is because we're not being truthful about our faith. Once you stop being truthful about your faith, then you're going to begin to live a life of sin, and then you cover it up; because once you start lying in one area of your life, you're going to start lying in every other area of your life. His point is, if you'll be truthful from the get-go in your relationship, and I would say in a way your relationship with your brothers is the litmus test of the reality of your faith. "Oh, I love God." Let's see. Oftentimes hear people say, "Well, I can't forgive that." Then you're lying. You don't love God. Just go ahead and say you don't love God, and we all feel better about it. But if you say that you love God and you can't forgive them; "You know, I'm having trouble with it." Well, that's why Scripture says you can be angry about something, but you can't let the sun go down on your anger (Ephesians 4:26). Then it goes on and says, and by the way, speak truth to one another. Why do you think it puts it in that same text? Because what he's saying is you've not been real about your love for the Lord or for your brother. So, you've got to get real about this. Just ask yourself, we'll just kind of do a little practice here. Litmus test. In and of ourselves is there anybody that you might say, "I really don't like them," in the body of Christ? Just think about it. Is there anybody that you're having a hard time forgiving? Think about it, because if there is, you've been lying and you're living a lie. Let me just say this, that lie will lead to other lies. In fact, the way that Scripture begins to reveal it is once you start living in hypocrisy, then it literally sears your conscience. Paul talks about this to Timothy, in the book of Timothy, so your conscience becomes seared. You become callous. You want somebody callous? Start lying. Lying produces callousness, it produces hardness. It produces it because you no longer feel anymore, you no longer care for people anymore. That lack of transparency causes love to grow cold, because hey, it's just acting, right? There's no real heart in it. You want to be careful what you say to one another. Be careful what you say. Are you saying it just to make them feel good at that moment, or are you saying it because you're devoted to them, and you really care about them, and you really care about their feelings, and you care about their emotions? Or is it just about you?

The point, it goes on and says:

1 John 2:10. "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him."

Isn't that great? How it actually uses this is, you want to see if you love God? All right, let's just make it practical and let's see the reality of it. "I can love everybody but my husband." I never could really understand that, you chose him. God didn't tell you that you need to love this guy or wife or whatever.

1 John 2:10. "The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him."

1 John 2:11. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

You're walking in obscurity. You're walking in lies, and it's no wonder you feel defeated in everything and every other area of your life; because nothing in your life is true.

He doesn't even know he's blind. He thinks everything's ok. He's been living that way all the time.

There's a passage, if you look with me in 2 Corinthians 4. It's always been an endearing passage to me because of the fact that Paul is trying to get sincere with the Corinthians. In the sense that, you need to stop being childish and you need to start being real about your love for one another. Real comfort and real assurance aren't going to come till you start getting real. So, it's almost a parallel within the passage. What Paul begins to talk about is the gospel. We call the gospel the truth of God, and the Spirit of God is the one who proclaims through us this message. So, it's all supposed to be coming out true, right? So, for instance, if you're sharing the gospel with somebody, you actually love the gospel too, right? You're not just doing it to get a notch in your belt or something, and when you're sharing the gospel, you actually love the person that you're sharing it with. So, the reality of it's there, and what concerns Paul is there are people coming into ministry, and they were seeing it as an opportunity to take advantage of people or to make money. I mean, you have an Ananias and Sapphira that come in, and their perception is, "I think people will like me if it looks like I gave a lot more than I did." So, they blow up the amount that they give, and they lie about the amount; and the whole thing with Peter is, you lied to the Spirit of God. He doesn't say, "you lied to me," he said, "you lied to the Spirit of God." A lot of us were saying there was no crime. That's the crime. You lied to the Spirit of truth. You knew it was wrong. You have Simon that comes in a little bit later in the church and he goes, "I'd like this power to bless people with the power of the Spirit of God. It seems to really draw a crowd." And they say you need a lot of prayer, you're in trouble. Ananias and Sapphira die right there. We go, "lying is not a big deal." It is a big deal. It's a big deal with God, see, because our whole message is based on truth. Everything about our message is truth. This

is why this whole facade-ish, character and nature of the church that it's beginning to take on is so satanic because it's everything that's not true. We've got to be real about this.

We'll pick up in 2 Corinthians 2:14:

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

2 Corinthians 2:15. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

2 Corinthians 2:16. to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”

His point is that if you're real, you're going to have an effect on people. Some people are going to say, “Whoa, this guy's condemning me.” No, that was the Spirit of God that did that. But your life and the proclamation of the truth is going to convict them. Others, they're going to go, “truth” and they're going to embrace it and go, “I smell life.”

2 Corinthians 2:17. “For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.”

It's like it's from God. Is there anything that God says to us that He didn't mean? When He says, “I love you so much that I'm going to give my son,” did He? So, there's nothing that He says to us that He doesn't mean, and that's the way the gospel ought to be proclaimed. That's the way the church ought to live. That's the point. Now, he gives the interesting point of the law, which couldn't do that, and he talks about the glory of the law.

2 Corinthians 3:10. “For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.

2 Corinthians 3:11. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.”

He's talking about the law and the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 3:17. “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:18. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

The “glory” is basically we hear the word of God, we know the truth, but what transforms us into His image is the Spirit of God living within us. So, what is the Light? The Light is the Spirit of God. Once again, to clarify that for you, when in fact you're walking in the light, you're doing everything you do because you really mean it. Spirit of truth. That's why he says in 2 Corinthians

4:1, "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart," because what we have is real. Now he's going to make a point:

2 Corinthians 4:3. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Corinthians 4:4. in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:5. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4:6. For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

In other words, as Romans 5:5 says, the love of God has been poured out within my heart through the Holy Spirit given to me. So, I partook of the love of God and His love now abides in me. Now, what do you think will happen? Well, we love because He first loved us. The Spirit of God is the love of God that is within me, and I do everything out of love. As Paul will say in 1 Corinthians 16, do all that you do out of love. Well, that's walking in the Spirit, and if you're not walking in the Spirit, and you say you love God, you're lying. See, you're not walking in truth. So, John is trying to get us back into truth. This is soul searching stuff. We're not talking about the goal being perfection, we're talking about the goal of having the heart of Christ. If in fact, you take all of this seriously, you find yourself coming to God and going, "help me to have a right heart towards this person. Help me to actually care for their soul. Help me to love them like You would love them." And you begin to test what you do and how you do it. That's part of the trying to learn what is pleasing to God. Well, what is pleasing to God is truth. He's looking for those who will worship Him in Spirit and truth. Is your spirit really in this? "No, not really, but I had to do it." Gods wants something more than that. That's what I want for this church. That's what I want for me, and look, I got to get beyond 10%. I know that in any given day, but I am pressing on towards the mark of the high calling. When I talk to you, I can honestly say when in the *New Members* class, ask any questions, I'll be glad to answer them, really. That's a moment I'm in the spirit of God. Ask me any question, I'll be glad. I want to talk to you about the word of God. I'm thrilled about talking about the word of God. Our desire is to live this way in the body of Christ. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing for this fellowship? That's our goal and if we can be that different than the world, what a wonderful thing that will be. John is getting us to come out of talk and he's getting us into reality.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and Lord, we ask that you would search our hearts and try us and see if there is any hurtful, destructive way in us. Because the fact of the matter is that we hide and lie to ourselves. We deceive ourselves. We have hidden faults that we need You to acquit us of.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, what we're asking you to do is examine your hearts. John is saying, you say that you love Jesus, you say that you receive the love of Christ in your hearts. Then why is not the love of Christ constraining you to do what you do? Why is it that you're forced to do or upset every time you pursue doing something right, or you find yourself getting angry in the midst of it? What is this? I mean, you say you love God, you love your brother, right? God's asking us to examine our hearts. It's a very simple test. Are you disgruntled? Are you upset with anybody? God is constantly causing me, and telling me, you've got to examine. Why are you doing what you're doing? Scripture clearly tells us you have to reprove somebody doing something wrong, but you can't hate them. You can't dislike them. It's not an option because it's not the Spirit of God. How amazing it is that Christ, while we were yet sinners, He loved us. And He cried out "Father, forgive them" in the midst of their hate. This is a love that God is drawing us to. It needs to be real.